

What is CAPS?

By James R. Oelschlager, Psy.D., and Tim Fortney

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides services to the students of Florida Tech. We provide individual therapy, group therapy, psychological testing, career testing and outreach for the campus. All of our services are free of charge, excluding mandatory alcohol assessments and ADHD/Learning Disability Evaluation. We are located at the corner of Country Club Road and University Boulevard, directly behind the Health Center. Our hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday. When you call CAPS, an initial appointment is made at your convenience with one of our therapists. We are also available for crisis intervention, and you are free to walk in and meet with someone immediately if there is an emergency.

What is therapy?

Therapy is a process in which a person obtains help for emotional problems from a trained professional. By establishing a positive, trusting relationship, the therapist will try to help the individual cope with the problem, learn appropriate coping strategies and discover more about him/herself. Research has shown that therapy helps the individual feel better and gain resolution to his/her problems more quickly than if he/she dealt with them alone.

You must keep in mind that therapy takes commitment, work and time. Sometimes, the process of talking about painful emotions can be difficult, but sticking with therapy is important to truly benefit. Remember that therapy is not magic. Your counselor does not have the perfect answer to solving problems. Instead, it is a process of working together to reach the best solution for you. If you choose to continue therapy, you often learn tools to help you in the future, even if you are no longer attending therapy.

What can you expect?

Some students are reluctant to go to CAPS because they don't know what to expect. Upon arrival, all students are asked to fill out an intake form, which asks for basic information. Go to www.fit.edu/caps for sample forms. This is kept as part of the confidential file. Many students wonder if counseling appointments or information will somehow end up on their "permanent academic record." The answer is NO. All sessions are free, private and confidential. Only with the student's written permission are we free to share information with anyone.

Students will meet with a member of the counseling staff for about an hour, or perhaps less. Some emergencies take more time, so we try to give students all the time that they need. During the first session, the counselor will try to ascertain what the problem or issue is. They will try to see if counseling is the best approach to it and give a brief explanation of the counseling process. The counselor will usually wind up by asking the students if they wish to make another appointment.

What happens at the first appointment?

Before meeting with you, your counselor will have reviewed the information you provided through the intake paperwork. You will have the opportunity to tell the counselor in more detail precisely what your needs and concerns are, and what you hope to accomplish in counseling. You will be able to ask any questions about the benefits of both individual and group counseling, the limits of confidentiality, and about any of the other services that are available. The initial appointment will last about 45–50 minutes.

What happens in counseling?

At first, you may feel a little nervous about counseling, but this normally fades as your counselor helps you talk

about your concerns. There is likely to be some balance between talking about your present day experiences and adjustments and talking about the past experiences or situations in your life that may have contributed to the problems that you currently face. The exact focus and balance of your counseling experience will depend on the issues that you bring to therapy, your counselor's perspective and the preferences you voice over the course of counseling.

Successful counseling can expect to have ups and downs. Sometimes you may feel you are making rapid progress; at other times you may feel stuck. You can make important contributions to ensure the success of your counseling. Counseling is more helpful when you are willing to change and willing to be open and honest about your feelings. In counseling, the more you share your thoughts and feelings about yourself, your problems and the counseling process itself, the more you are likely to benefit. It is also important to attend all scheduled sessions, give some forethought as to what you want to discuss during each session and apply things you have spoken about in counseling to your life throughout the week. Coming to CAPS often marks a student's first experience in counseling. As a result, your counselor will expect you to have questions about the counseling process and will be pleased to answer them.

Getting the most benefit from your counseling

Personal commitment to your own growth and change is crucial to success in counseling. You can enhance your development by taking risks, such as disclosing information that is difficult to talk about, being open, honest and actively participating. You can continue the counseling process between sessions

by thinking about what you have talked about and experienced during sessions, focusing on the changes that you want to make and working on specific assignments agreed upon by you and your counselor.

What are some common issues in counseling?

- Adjusting to university life and/or a new culture
- Procrastination/time management issues
- Difficulties with motivation or decision making
- Relationship issues—with friends, families, partners, roommates
- Relationship breakups
- Sleep difficulties
- Test anxiety
- Uncertainty about your major and career direction
- Depression, loneliness or anxiety
- Feeling suicidal and that life is not worth living
- Worries about eating, drinking or drug taking behaviors
- Difficulties making friends or knowing how to talk to others
- Concerns about a friend or a loved one
- Coping with your own illness
- Feeling stressed and overwhelmed

What other services does CAPS provide?

CAPS offers outreach services throughout the campus. We provide multiple presentations on relevant topics such as stress management, relationship enhancement, body image, self esteem and alcohol awareness. We have many brochures and pamphlets on relevant topics, such as depression, learning disabilities, adjusting to a new culture, etc. These are on display in the CAPS lobby, and you are free to stop by and take them any time. We have a psychiatrist who consults with CAPS once per week to offer medication management for students with psychiatric medi-

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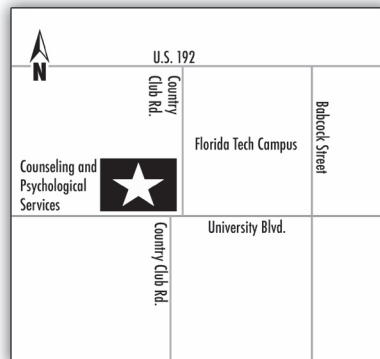
CAPS is a counseling facility operated by Florida Institute of Technology's School of Psychology. Its goals are to promote the best possible academic, vocational and emotional health. Our services are available to students and their immediate families. Call CAPS at (321) 674-8050.

Center Hours

Monday–Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. • Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location

Intersection of Country Club Road and University Boulevard, west of Babcock Street



For additional counseling, academic success resources and helpful articles, visit www.fit.edu/caps or call 674-8050.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THERAPY

but didn't want to ask



Florida Institute of Technology
Counseling and Psychological Services